

February 11, 1999

EDUCATION POLICY POINTS

- **Returning Decision Making to Local Educators** — Republicans trust teachers and state and local school officials, in conjunction with parents, to make decisions addressing the needs of our nation's students.
 - Individual classrooms should be able to meet individual needs. With 46 million students in about 87,000 public schools, communities need the flexibility to address their unique needs.
 - Education dollars should be spent on students, not bureaucratic red tape. We know that re-designing the flow of education dollars is necessary when:
 - ▶ The federal government provides only 7 percent of local school funding but demands 50 percent of all school paperwork; and when
 - ▶ This paperwork burden demands nearly 49 million hours each year or the equivalent of 25,000 employees working full time on paper, not kids.
- **Reaching for Academic Excellence** — Republicans support the efforts of families, localities, and states to define academic quality.
 - Republicans recognize that in the 21st century, education will be the primary ticket for economic success — even more than now.
 - We know that re-defining academic quality for the 21st century is necessary when:
 - ▶ 66 percent of 17-year-olds do not read at a proficient level;
 - ▶ Businesses spend more than \$30 billion annually in retraining employees, primarily because they cannot read at an adult level; and when
 - ▶ Nearly 30 percent of college freshman need remedial course work before beginning their college-level work.

- **Reaching for Teaching Excellence** — Republicans support rewarding schools and teachers who increase student performance. We want to assure that every child has an effective, highly qualified teacher.
 - All parents deserve to know if their child is being taught by teachers who demonstrate excellence in teaching. We expect schools to ensure that all of their teachers are proficient in their subject areas.
 - We know that redefining teaching excellence is necessary when:
 - ▶ More than 25 percent of new teachers enter our nation's schools without adequate teaching skills or without training in their subject, according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [This nonpartisan group is made up of governors, educators, and business leaders.];
 - ▶ One in seven teachers who enter our nation's schools has not fully met state standards; and when
 - ▶ 20 percent of science teachers, 31 percent of English teachers, and 40 percent of math teachers do not have a major or minor in the field in which they teach. In inner-city schools, the statistics are even worse.
- **Returning Safety to The Schoolhouse** — Republicans believe that every child should be challenged to learn — not challenged to survive.
 - We know that the lines about protecting our school children need to be re-drawn when:
 - ▶ One in nine students (and one in three in high-crime areas) reports having cut class to avoid being beaten or shot; and when
 - ▶ 47 percent of students in grades 6-12 report their teachers spending at least half of daily class time disciplining unruly classmates, according to a *USA Today* survey of more than 60,000 students.

Staff Contact: Kenneth Foss, 224-2946